



Home Again

Revitalizing Communities One Home at a Time

Program Information

Mayor Anthony A. Williams and his administration are committed to promoting neighborhood revitalization and increasing homeownership opportunities in the District of Columbia. One critical challenge is the pervasiveness of vacant and abandoned residential properties, which create public safety problems and convey negative images of communities. In 1999, the Department of Consumer Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) identified over 2,700 vacant and abandoned residential properties in the District.

In January 2002, Mayor Anthony A. Williams announced the creation of Home Again, an initiative designed to strengthen District neighborhoods by transforming vacant and abandoned residential properties into homeownership opportunities for residents of all income levels. Home Again is a key component of the District of Columbia's neighborhood revitalization strategy, which is one top priorities of the Williams Administration.

To accomplish its mission, Home Again has three clearly defined goals: 1) to encourage property owners to rehabilitate and occupy their vacant and abandoned residential property; 2) to acquire, dispose of, and rehabilitate properties when owners fail to maintain them; and, 3) to provide affordable housing opportunities.

Home Again began by focusing on five neighborhoods with high concentrations of vacant and abandoned residential property: Columbia Heights, Ivy City/Trinidad, Near Northeast, Shaw/Ledroit Park and Rosedale. The residents in these communities also identified rehabilitating vacant and abandoned properties as a high priority in their Strategic Neighborhood Action Plans (SNAPs). In FY06, under the leadership of Deputy Mayor Stanley Jackson, four new neighborhoods in East Washington have been added to the program: Deanwood, Marshall Heights, Anacostia, and Bellevue.

Home Again in Action:

Home Again begins by identifying a vacant and abandoned residential property and contacting the owner about the status of the site. In some cases, owners decide to rehabilitate the properties themselves after being encouraged by Home Again. In other cases, owners agree to sell their property to the District. If owners fail to properly maintain their properties, then the District gains site control through eminent domain or by foreclosing on the property for delinquent taxes.

Once Home Again acquires properties, they are bundled according to their geography and economic potential. Prequalified developers then bid to purchase and renovate the bundle.

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Home Again requires that developers apply for pre-qualified status to ensure that they are capable of executing high quality rehabilitation in a timely fashion. Home Again selects a developer based on several factors including the quality of the rehabilitation and the unit sale prices. The selected developer has one year from the time of closing on the bundle to complete the rehabilitation. Once completed, the properties are sold by the developer to qualified homebuyers. A goal of Home Again is that 30% of all properties be sold to homebuyers who earn less than 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Home Again Key Accomplishments (as of 2nd Quarter FY 2006):

- Identified and investigated 1,187 vacant properties.
- Awarded 137 properties to pre-qualified developers. Out of the 137 properties 244 housing units will be created.
- 25% of the proposed new housing units are dedicated as affordable for buyers earning less than 60% of the area median income (AMI).
- 355 homes rehabilitated by existing owners and Home Again developers.
- 41 developers have been pre-qualified through the Request for Qualification process.

Rehabilitation Timelines:

Prior to the creation of Home Again, the several District agencies were responsible for acquiring and disposing of vacant and abandoned property. Home Again has since developed strong partnerships with the government agencies, such as DCRA and DHCD, and has streamlined the city's approach to abandonment. As a result of Home Again, the District's acquisition timeline has shrunk from over two years to between 2 and 12 months, depending on the acquisition method. The following are the approximate timelines of the Home Again process.

Prequalification: Home Again evaluates RFQs on a rolling basis and sends responses within 45 days of submittal.

Acquisition: It can take up to 2 months to acquire a property through friendly sale and 1 year to acquire a property through eminent domain or tax foreclosure.

Disposition: Home Again issues RFP's in Spring, Summer, and Fall and awards a developer within 4 months of the distribution. Developers typically close on a bundle within 3 to 9 months of being selected.

Rehabilitation: Developers must complete the redevelopment within one year of closing on the bundle.

Home Again is proud to contribute to neighborhood revitalization by creating homeownership opportunities District residents. Forging partnerships with developers and gaining support from the communities in which we work is important to the Initiative's success. If you would like additional information, please contact Home Again at (202) 478-1355 or visit the website at www.dcbiz.dc.gov

(Information last updated July 2006)

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